



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy No.: DOC 3.1.21	Subject: <b>OFFENDER COUNT AND SUPERVISION</b>
Chapter 3: FACILITY/PROGRAM OPERATIONS	Page 1 of 5
Section 1: Security and Control	Revision Date: March 8, 1999
Signature: /s/ by Rick Day, Director 3/8/99	Effective Date: March 1, 1997

**I. POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to maintain safe and secure facility operations through a comprehensive count, and record-keeping systems, and other internal supervision programs.

**II. AUTHORITY:**

53-1-203, MCA. Powers and Duties of the Department  
DOC Policy 3.1.11 Security and Control

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

**Census Check** means a periodic informal count in the housing units and on the job to determine if any offenders are out of their area.

**Emergency Count** means an official count taken at other than one of the times specified for a regular count when an offender is suspected of missing or for other purposes.

**Official Count** means a count routinely conducted each day at specified times to account for all offenders in a facility.

**Outcount** is a count that is not conducted in quarters or normal counting areas.

**Stand-up Count** means a count where offenders are required to stand at the doors of their cells or at the end of their beds to demonstrate that they are physically present and not deceiving the observer through the use of dummies or other simulations.

**Picture Counts** mean counts where offenders picture card identification are used to verify the identity of the offender being counted.

**IV. PROCEDURES:**

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Offender count and accountability procedures are the backbone of supervision. All offenders are subject to count procedures on a schedule established by the facility Administrator and in coordination with record-keeping systems described in Department policy on master population reports. Offenders may never be permitted to participate in the preparation, documentation, or operation of the count process, or in the preparation of picture cards or other accountability or identification records.

**A. Official Counts**

Official counts must be conducted at specific times of the day and night in an organized manner. All offenders assigned to the facility must be counted, including those out of the facility on furlough, writ, or other categories of temporary release. All offender movement must cease before the count begins and remain suspended until the total facility count is clear and correct. Other than life-threatening emergencies, there must be no offender movement during official counts; any movement must be kept to a minimum and immediately reported to the officer responsible for the count. Each offender must be counted at a specific location. Staff shall allow nothing short of an emergency to distract them during a count.

**B. Count Times**

Each facility Administrator will schedule a minimum of four official counts throughout the 24-hour day, ensuring at least one count per shift. Count times will be arranged to provide as little interference as possible with the daily work and activity schedules and yet still provide accountability for all offenders. Typical count times include midnight, mid-morning, before opening the facility for the day, end of work day, and a lock-up count. The lock-up count shall be a stand-up count.

**C. General Count Guidelines**

Each count must be made accurately and promptly. If there is any doubt as to the correctness of the count, a recount must be taken. Offenders must be visually identified on each count. A report of each count must be communicated to the control center. All reports must then be checked and coordinated to verify that the total facility count is correct and all offenders are present. Each officer conducting a count shall prepare a count slip, sign it in ink, and forward it to the control center. The count officer shall order a recount if a count is inaccurate. The control center officer is responsible for tallying the written verification of the counts. No erasures or changes are permitted on count slips. The facility count cannot be cleared until all offenders are accounted for.

**D. Count Records**

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Count records must be maintained in the control center, where all counts are recorded. Count records are to be based on a system of offender tracking that will enable staff to determine the assignment of all offenders at all times, and to conduct an emergency count at any time. The officer responsible for maintaining the master count must be provided up-to-the-minute information regarding all offender housing moves, work assignment changes, admissions to the hospital, commitments, releases, temporary releases, and any other changes that could affect accountability. Count records must be sufficiently detailed so as to enable reconstruction of any count for up to 30 days after the count was taken.

**E. Housing Unit Procedures**

Each facility/program Administrator must develop a procedure for conducting counts within their respective housing units. Officers must be positive they see a live human body before counting an offender as present. When making night counts, flashlights should be used judiciously, but enough light should be shown on the offender to ensure that the offender is actually being counted. The officer must see "a living, breathing body."

**F. Count Slips**

Each employee making and reporting a count (including those counting offenders on out count--see below) shall prepare and forward count slips to the control center. These slips may not be accepted if they are incorrectly completed or have erasures, strikeouts, or alterations of any kind. The officer making the count must sign the count slip.

**G. Outcounts**

Outcounts must be authorized by the shift supervisor for offenders who must be counted in their work area, such as food service, maintenance, etc. Each facility/program Administrator must develop a written Outcount procedure. A signed count slip must be submitted to the control center supporting the Outcount called in. Outcounts during official counts must be kept to a minimum number to ensure the accuracy in accounting for offenders.

**H. Census Checks**

Census checks are periodic, informal counts in housing units and on the job to determine if any offenders are out of their authorized areas. Census checks are logged in the unit log, but not called in to the control center unless an offender is missing. An unannounced, more formal census check

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may be used periodically to determine the location of all offenders in the facility, to monitor the effectiveness of the facility's pass, callout, and controlled movement systems.

**I. Emergency Counts**

An emergency count is an official count taken at other than one of the times specified for a regular official count when an offender is suspected of being missing or for other purposes. In an emergency count, all offenders are returned immediately to their assigned housing units, or other designated location, to be counted. After a major disturbance is under control, a count must be taken to determine that no one has escaped or is in hiding. For that reason, the control center shall maintain count records that reflect the unit assignments of all offenders at all times.

**J. Picture Counts**

Picture counts may be necessary in the event of an escape. Staff taking the count must verify the identity of each offender through the use of the ID picture card. Staff must regularly review all picture cards on file to assure that they accurately portray the likenesses of the offender. When necessary, offenders will be sent to the receiving area to have a new set of pictures taken, which will then be distributed to all locations with pictures on file.

**K. Transportation Counts**

When escorting large numbers of offenders, counts shall be conducted to ensure the proper number of offenders are in custody. Before groups of offenders are confined to seats in a vehicle, they must be placed in a line and, as their names are called, pass by the officer/supervisor stating their name and AO number. The officer/supervisor must also identify them by picture. Another count must be taken after all offenders are seated in the vehicle. Numerical counts will be repeated whenever the vehicle stops and again when the trip resumes.

**L. Offender Identification Systems**

In conjunction with the master offender record system, the control center shall maintain a master picture card system that contains information on all offenders in the facility. Records must be maintained that identify bed or cell locations and contain a picture card or sheet on each offender, so that the occupant of each cell, room or bed space can be positively identified. These records must contain other background information on the offender as well, such as offense committed, mental status, past behavioral problems, etc..

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A crew kit card system will be established for work details, so that each detail supervisor will have a picture card for each offender in the crew. The card will have a physical description, and may also have background information on the offender, much the same as that contained in the unit records but incorporated into a durable, wallet-sized format for easy carrying and reference by a work supervisor. Picture card identification procedures must be established at entrances for offenders who move regularly outside the facility for work details. An approved picture file must be maintained on these individuals, with the facility Administrator or designee personally signing all such gate passes or cards.

**M. Offender Supervision**

In addition to count procedures, staff supervision is critical to facility/program security. Staff must be on duty in housing areas and other critical posts 24 hours a day to be able to supervise, observe, and interact with offenders. Staff must be active in patrolling housing units, and must be alert to unusual incidents, changes in types of offender interaction, or other signs of unusual activity in the facility. Staff must stay out of office areas to the greatest extent their duties allow and remain in personal contact with the offenders in their units/facilities/programs. Staff surveillance of key locations is an important part of the internal surveillance program.

Each facility shall establish procedures by which to supervise inmates according to custody level, type and location of work assignment and housing assignment. Additional supervision may include shakedown points or additional census checks on an irregular basis.

**N. Locked Unit Supervision**

Offenders in locked status must be under direct staff supervision in the unit. Unit operations must ensure irregular rounds of the unit, made not less than every 60 minutes. More frequent supervision may be warranted in special instances. Special suicide watch cases, as identified by appropriate staff, will be afforded constant supervision. Electronic supervision by television monitors is not a substitute for staff supervision, only an aid. Voice or other communication capability with offenders will be maintained at all times. Offenders involved in recreation activity, including those in locked units, will be subject to direct staff supervision at all times when they are engaged in such activity.

**V. CLOSING:**

Questions concerning this policy shall be directed to the immediate supervisor.